



Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship

A Sustainable Grow Your Own Model

In January 2022, Tennessee became the first state to be approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to establish a permanent Grow Your Own (GYO) model, the Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship program. Tennessee was the first state in the country to sponsor Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship programs between school districts and Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) to further the state's and nation's efforts to extend the teacher pipeline and address teacher shortages.

What is a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

A Registered Apprenticeship Program is a proven model of professional training that has been validated by either the USDOL or a State Apprenticeship Agency. Tennessee's Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship was the first of its kind federally registered through the USDOL, meeting national quality standards that are hallmarks for both employers and job seeking apprentices.

How is Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship different than previous GYO programs?

Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship aligns best practices from initial GYO programs with the funding and rigors of a national apprenticeship standard. The Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship is a sustainably funded model to address the financial, recruitment, and preparation challenges school districts experience – both in the short- and long-term. While previous GYO programs were funded through relief dollars, Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship model leverages both state and federal workforce dollars, preserving locally designed programs that meet a national apprenticeship standard.

What are the benefits to Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship model?

The model is an evolution of the state's original GYO approach. Now, instead of offering competitive grants for districts to receive one-time funding, Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeships offer sustainable funding opportunities through federal and state workforce dollars for no-cost pathways and stronger programming.

Tennessee's Teacher Apprenticeship *(cont.)*

The Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship program includes every component of a typical Tennessee GYO program, still designed to recruit and develop local participants from the community, for the community. Degree-apprenticeships are a strong model for providing structured, low-cost training for occupations that require degrees, such as teaching and other in-demand education positions. Any teaching apprenticeship program must reflect the specific apprenticeship components for initial national or state-seeking approval:



On-the-Job, Competency-Based Learning

The Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship ensures prospective educators learn on-the-job. The nationally registered model is a competency-based apprenticeship program that focuses on the apprentice's ability to demonstrate skills in an observable and measurable way. Not only do school districts determine core competencies throughout an apprentice's training, but apprentices are also able to move through related coursework upon proficiency rather than time bound semesters.



Earn While You Learn

Apprentices must receive increases in pay as their skills and knowledge increase. In this model, teacher apprentices are compensated progressive wages as their responsibilities as a district employed teaching aid increase.



Graduate Within Three Years Rather than Four

The minimum term of an apprenticeship is three years of job-embedded learning and related education coursework. Participants receive 6,000 on-the-job learning hours while they earn their four-year bachelor's degree in three-years.



Future Employment and Full Certification

At program completion, apprentices are hired into the district they trained in. Graduates are fully licensed and endorsed Tennessee teachers.



Deep District Involvement in the Training Process

Employers are the foundation of every apprenticeship program, and in Tennessee's model, districts play an active role to ensure that participants meet the district's needs and expectations – both during the program and for future employment.



Sustainable Funding Opportunities

By registering a Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship program with USDOL, federal funds are available to the district's program. Apprenticeships are supported by several federal grant opportunities through USDOL and are often eligible for additional state-supported funding streams. Teacher apprentices may also have access to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds through local workforce boards to cover tuition, childcare, and transportation expenses.